

Inside Sea Grant

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S.C. Sea Grant Consortium celebrates 25 years, Hollings honored

THE S.C. SEA GRANT CONSORTIUM celebrated its 25th anniversary during a prestigious event September 29, 2005 at The Citadel Beach House on the Isle of Palms. The purpose of this occasion was two-fold: To acknowledge and thank colleagues, friends, and partners for their contributions to the Consortium's success, and to recognize Senator (Retired) Ernest F. "Fritz" Hollings for his decades-long dedication to ocean and coastal resources.

Nearly 150 representatives from government, academia, and the business community attended the event, which was highlighted by a series of speakers including:

- Dr. Andrew Sorensen, president of University of South Carolina, and S.C. Sea Grant board chair;
- Scott Rayder, chief of staff, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA);
- Louisa Koch, deputy assistant administrator, NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research;
- Dr. Ronald Baird, director, NOAA National Sea Grant College Program; and
- Margaret Davidson, director, NOAA Coastal Services Center.

During his tenure in the U.S. Senate, Fritz Hollings was a champion for ocean and coastal issues around the nation. In South Carolina, he secured funding for land conservation; helped create the Congaree National Park in



S.C. Sea Grant Executive Director Rick DeVoe gives Senator (Ret.) Ernest "Fritz" Hollings a token of the agency's appreciation for his dedication to ocean and coastal resources.

the Midlands; brought in funding for countless research projects and collaborations, including the Hollings Marine Laboratory in Charleston; and helped provide federal funds for Consortium environmental education training through undergraduate fellowship programs. Both the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium and the NOAA Sea Grant College Program presented Senator Hollings with tokens of appreciation for his tireless efforts toward marine science research, education, and management support.

"Over the past 25 years, S.C. Sea Grant has played an instrumental role in meeting the challenges presented by growth and it is ideally suited to help coastal communities continue to meet these challenges in the years ahead," said Louisa Koch, deputy assistant administrator, NOAA Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research.

Today, the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium has grown into a \$6-million-dollar agency, an accomplishment achieved through partnerships, resource leveraging, and engagement at the state, regional, and national levels. Said Ronald Baird, director, NOAA National Sea Grant College Program, "Under the able leadership of Director Rick DeVoe, S.C. Sea Grant's work on many critical coastal issues, such as coastal erosion, coastal observing systems, land-use planning, plus engaging critical policymakers, bodes well for another 25 years of contributions to a state whose coastal areas are faced with unprecedented growth and development."

For more information about the Consortium's research, education, and outreach programs, please visit www.scseagrant.org.



Inside Sea Grant is published two times a year to inform interested constituents about goals, activities, and accomplishments of the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium.

S.C. Sea Grant Consortium is a university-based state agency supporting research, education, and outreach to conserve coastal resources and enhance economic opportunity for the people of South Carolina and the region.

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The Consortium's Board of Directors is composed of the chief executive officers of its member institutions.

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Project Spotlight

Can the blue crab survive modern times?

SOUTH CAROLINA'S BLUE CRAB, which supports a \$5-million-dollar commercial fishery, can be one of the most difficult species to manage. The state's blue crab population is vulnerable to water pollution, winter freezes, habitat destruction, tropical storms, and fishing pressure.

Now, S.C. Sea Grant scientists Michael Childress, a Clemson University biologist, and Elizabeth Wenner, a marine scientist at the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, are developing an innovative computer model to help manage the blue crab fishery in South Carolina.

"We're testing 'what if' scenarios to determine the impact of changes in water quality and fishing pressure on blue crab populations," says Childress. "How sensitive are blue crabs to changes in temperature, salinity, oxygen levels, or fishing pressure?"

Using a traditional fishery-population model, managers can track the number of a particular fish species living in an ecosystem, what size those fish are, and then with this information they make predictions on allowable catches to sustain the fishery.

One limitation of the traditional model is that it usually assumes that a species occupies a single habitat. Blue crabs, however, have multiple life stages in various habitats from salt-marsh creeks to open ocean waters during their lifetimes.

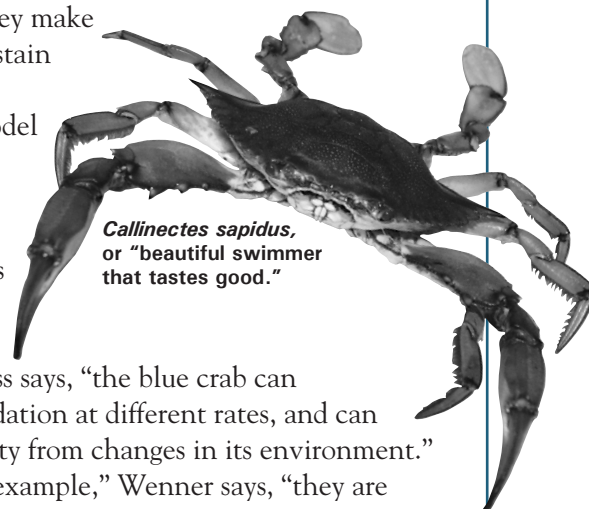
"During various life stages," Childress says, "the blue crab can grow at different rates, experience predation at different rates, and can be subject to different kinds of mortality from changes in its environment."

"When blue crabs are juveniles, for example," Wenner says, "they are particularly vulnerable in tidal creek nursery areas to heavy predation from mature blue crabs and fish."

Childress and Wenner's computer model will attempt to address complex interactions between various habitats and life stages of the blue crab. It will follow simulated individual blue crabs through time as they occupy habitats and encounter changing environmental conditions in the Ashley River near Charleston. In this way, the model simulates the dynamics of the entire blue crab population in the river.

The model can be used to quantify the benefits of various management techniques on blue crab populations. Eventually, Childress and Wenner will expand the model to include other regions of the South Carolina coast, and the program will be made available for public use through a Web-based, user-controlled interface.

To see the Ashley River population model in action and learn more about the South Carolina Blue Crab Regional Abundance Biotic Simulation (SCBCRABS), visit the project Web site at www.clemson.edu/SCBCRABS/.



Callinectes sapidus,
or "beautiful swimmer
that tastes good."

Accomplishments at a glance

COASTAL HERITAGE WINS INTERNATIONAL COMMUNICATION AWARD

Coastal Heritage, a quarterly publication of the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, recently won four awards, including an international award.

Coastal Heritage was judged at the 2004-2005 Society for Technical Communication (STC) international competition, where it won an Excellence Award. Entries were drawn from chapters and regional competitions in the United States, Canada, 13 European nations, Australia, and Israel.

The spring 2004 issue won a Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE) Grand Award from District III for its outstanding content, graphic design, and communication effectiveness. This issue covered Consortium program highlights from 2000-2004.

Coastal Heritage also won the Society for Technical Communication-Carolina Chapter Distinguished Award in the 2004-2005 technical publications category and the Best of Show Award.

KNIGHT SELECTED TO SERVE ON GRIEVANCE BOARD

Elaine Knight, assistant director of the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium, has been selected by the S.C.



Knight

Budget and Control Board to serve on the State Employee Grievance Committee. Her appointment is for a three-year term effective once training by the Office of Human Resources is completed. She will receive training in grievance hearing processes and mediation services for state employees.

SPENCE RECEIVES EDUCATION AWARD

Lundie Spence, director of the Center for Ocean Sciences Education Excellence–SouthEast (COSEE-SE), has won the Marine Educator of the Year award from the S.C. Marine Educators Association. Spence has been a leader in marine education for more than 20 years.

FISHERIES SECTION ADDED TO WEB SITE

A new marine fisheries section was added to the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium Web site. Users can now access information on, among other things, the South Carolina Shrimp Fishery Assistance Project and the South Atlantic Sea Grant Fisheries Extension and Enhancement Initiative. Visit www.scseagrant.org/extension/extension_fisheries.htm for more information.

EXTENSION SPECIALIST HONORED

Jack Whetstone, marine aquaculture specialist with the S.C. Sea Grant Extension Program, earned an Alumni Award for Cooperative Extension Distinguished Public Service, which is the highest honor awarded to an Extension professional. The award is given annually by the Clemson University Alumni Association to recognize an Extension Administrator, Specialist, or County Agent who teaches both in and out of the classroom. It also serves to acknowledge distinguished public service by citizenry of the state.

STATEWIDE CLEANUP NETS 58.5 TONS OF TRASH

The 17th annual Beach Sweep/River Sweep was held September 17, 2005, and nearly 6,000 volunteers across South Carolina joined forces to rid beaches, marshes, and waterways of unsightly, and sometimes dangerous, debris.

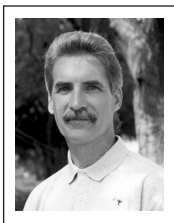
Covering over 1,050 miles in 38 of 46 counties, cleanup crews removed 58.5 tons of trash,

recycling much of what was collected. On the coast, volunteers tackled over 100 sites—from Waites Island to Daufuskie Island—that were made safer, healthier, and more beautiful for all to enjoy.

The litter cleanup is organized by the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, and is held

in conjunction with The Ocean Conservancy's International Coastal Cleanup. In 2006, the Sweep is scheduled for Saturday, September 16.

For more information or to volunteer, call (843) 727-2078 or visit the organizers' Web sites at www.scseagrant.org/education.htm and www.dnr.sc.gov/water.html.



**MESSAGE FROM THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Twenty-five years of service

by Rick DeVoe

THE YEAR 2005 marked the 25th anniversary of the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium. In 1978, the South Carolina General Assembly established the S.C. Sea Grant Consortium as an independent state agency to manage the Sea Grant Program for the State of South Carolina and adjacent regions that share a common environment and resource heritage. The Consortium's mission is to maximize the economic, social, and environmental potential of the state's coastal and marine resources through integrated programs of research, education, and technical assistance.

The Consortium officially opened the doors to its first office at Fort Johnson in January 1980. In April 1985, application was made to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce for Sea Grant College designation; Sea Grant College status was conferred on the Consortium in August 1986 by then-Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldrige. And in 1999, the Consortium was ranked as one of the country's leading Sea Grant

programs by a national program assessment team and the NOAA National Sea Grant College Program Office. The high-caliber work of faculty and staff at Consortium member institutions was a major factor in achieving this status.

Over the past two and a half decades, the South Carolina coast has been transformed due primarily to unprecedented population growth. People then and now are drawn to coastal South Carolina for the good life: beaches and golf, historic cities, culture and heritage, clean waterways, and fine hunting and fishing. And, for 25 years, Consortium programs have generated and delivered science-based information in support of continued economic growth and natural resource conservation. Over this time, the breadth of Consortium activities and its financial support have substantially increased—we have grown into a \$6-million-dollar agency.

But we could not, and did not, do it alone. Why the Consortium remains a viable and stable organization is because of the interest and involvement of its many partners and collaborators. In 2005, we celebrated the Consortium by acknowledging and thanking all of our colleagues and friends for the many contributions they have made to our success, and we look forward to continuing our service to the citizens of South Carolina in the future.



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